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ABSTRACT

This assessment of ten existing academic library instruction programs in the United States and Canada investigates administrative and staff support, instructional methods, and program impact as an aid to writing a guide to academic library instruction programs. A representative sample of ten library instruction programs was selected on the basis of: (1) geographic area; (2) size of the academic institution; (3) type of academic institution; (4) library instruction methodology; and (5) duration of program. Programs were evaluated through personal interviews with administrators, library staff, faculty, and students as well as appraisal of instructional and orientation information. Program statistics and cost information were also reviewed. Administrative, faculty, and library staff were found largely to be only partially involved with the programs and this partial involvement extended to program administration by public or reference services librarians. Instructional materials and methods varied widely and differed with respect to institution size. The formulation of objectives, record of statistical data and periodic program evaluations were found to be important in program organization. (CWM)

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An Assessment of Ten Academic Library Instruction Programs in the United States and Canada

A Council on Library Resources Fellowship Report

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September 25, 1976

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I appreciate greatly the support of the Council on Library Resources for this project and I thank them for providing me with this professional opportunity. I am also very grateful to Dr. Fred Blum, Director of Eastern's Center of Educational Resources for his support and encouragement throughout this project. Last but not least, I am indebted to the librarians who graciously cooperated with me during my visit to their libraries by scheduling meetings and by sharing their knowledge, experiences and concerns in the area of library instruction. I only hope that they also profited from my visit.

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INTRODUCTION

How should a library instruction program be planned and implemented? When is a library instruction program successful? Where can we find guidance in establishing and improving a library instruction program?

Such questions have been voiced repeatedly by participants of workshops and conferences on library instruction during the past five years. Similar questions have also been posed regularly by correspondents to Eastern Michigan University's Orientation Librarian.

It became apparent that guidance to academic library instruction was needed. As 1975-76 Council on Library Resources Fellow, I studied and tried to assess ten academic library instruction programs in the United States and Canada (see Appendix 1) in order to write a guide to such programs.* It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to evaluate a library instruction program at this time because there are no validated criteria for this purpose in existence. The ACRL Task Force on Bibliographic Instruction is working on this problem, and all of us in library instruction are awaiting the results of their work with great anticipation. In view of this, I selected and studied the ten programs based on my own criteria as listed in Appendix 2. These criteria are based on personal experiences with Eastern's

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*I am in the process of writing this guide which will be published by Johnson Associates, Inc. in 1977.

Library Outreach Orientation Program which had been sponsored from 1970-75 by the Council on Library Resources and the National Endowment for the Humanities, on my personal involvement with Eastern's annual orientation conferences and other related workshops, institutes and activities.

The programs I studied vary greatly in format, purpose and accomplishments, but all of them share two factors for success--enthusiasm and commitment to students.

It is also necessary to provide a definition for library instruction as used throughout this project. Library instruction is the process of teaching a user how to locate needed information efficiently by utilizing an information search strategy. As defined here library instruction includes various levels--orientation to the services and facilities of the library, instruction in reference sources, evaluation of information and bibliographic knowledge in one's subject major. It should occur on a progressive basis from the freshman through the graduate level.

METHODOLOGY

The selection of the ten programs was based on a search of the literature, personal contacts with librarians involved in library instruction and a search of the Project LOEX* files with the able assistance of the director of Project LOEX, Carolyn Kirkendall. To select ten institutions from the wealth of information I accumulated, the following criteria were used:

1. Representation of different parts of the country
2. Representation of institutions of different sizes
3. Representation of different types of institutions; private, public, two-year, four-year and graduate institutions
4. Representation of a variety of library instruction methodology
5. Duration of programs (at least five years)

I tried to be as objective as possible in selecting these institutions but I am sure, that someone else could have arrived at a completely different list. In other words, the programs I have selected were not necessarily the best or most successful in the United States or Canada, but they were certainly noteworthy and possessed successful elements based on my criteria as stated in Appendix 2.

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*Project LOEX is the national clearinghouse on library instruction materials and includes descriptions of some 525 academic library instruction programs in the U.S., Canada and a few other countries. It is located at Eastern Michigan University and funded by the Council on Library Resources.

After completing the selection of the ten institutions, I contacted them to set up a personal visit. Except for one institution, the response was most enthusiastic and accommodating.*

On the average, I spent one to two days at each institution. A schedule was usually arranged in advance which made it possible to speak with administrators in the library and university, librarians involved in the instructional program, other librarians, and in most cases, faculty and students. In several institutions I was also able to participate in library instruction classes and observe their media programs. On one occasion, an impromptu meeting on library instruction was held for area librarians so that I could share my findings with them.

During these visits I was able to interview two university presidents, several deans and department heads, seven library directors, twenty members of the teaching faculty, twenty-five students (freshmen to graduate students), forty-two librarians (ten of whom were directly responsible for library instruction) and seven other library staff members. The interviews were very candid because they were conducted individually or in small groups, in the case of the students. I was able to ask provocative questions to probe for positive and negative aspects and effects of the library instruction program. These interviews were most helpful in assessing the impact of the library instruction programs, particularly in relation to any attitudinal changes. One of the most intriguing aspects of the interviews

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*Another institution was substituted for the negative reply.

concerned my solicitation for advice and guidance to other librarians who are novices in library instruction. Responses to this were most individual and varied tremendously.

While visiting each institution I collected copies of all instructional and orientation information in printed format. The variety, attractiveness and thoughtfulness exhibited by these publications was astounding and gratifying. These materials indicate also the librarians' concern for their users, the students and the faculty, by trying to prepare materials which will appeal to them.

FINDINGS

In Appendix 4 I have attempted to provide a brief summary of what I found during my visits.

The first comparison of the ten institutions is in the area of administrative support.* The degree of successfulness of a library instruction program is closely related to the degree of administrative support for it. At those institutions where the administrative support reaches all the way to the top administration of the institution, I was able to discuss library instruction with such persons and ascertain that high-level administrative support encourages faculty and students to partake of library instructional activities. It also provides necessary funding, personnel and ideological support to develop a good program.

In situations where administrative support does not reach to the top of the institutions but stops at the library administration, the library instruction programs were also successful because both personnel and funding are available. There are, however, some difficulties at times with faculty and departmental cooperation.

If there is no support from the university or library administration, and a library instruction program is supported only by the library staff or some individual members of the

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*Administrative support for library instruction means that the administration understands the concept of library instruction, its value for students, the faculty's role in it, its relationship to the institution's objectives and furthermore, that the administration is concerned enough about the importance of library instruction to provide personnel, funds and other institutional support for a library instruction program.

staff, the situation becomes very difficult, and such a program is often supported only by extra work and energy on the part of the staff. This situation of the "underground" library instruction program was ably described by Alan Dyson (see bibliography, item 5). I found that such situations exist, particularly in older and large, traditional institutions and that any success of such programs is directly related to the energy and enthusiasm of one or more outstanding and committed individuals.

Another important factor is the support of other librarians and library staff for the library instruction program.* Without such support and good follow-up reference service, much of the instructional program will be lost. All of the institutions I visited had the support of most of the library staff who either participated actively in the program or who provided good follow-up service. In the large institutions there was often an orientation or instruction committee to insure communication and cooperation. Faculty support** for and involvement in library

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*Support from other library staff for a library instruction program means dependable follow-up reference service to individual students and faculty members and a united effort of all staff members to work toward the realization of established library instruction goals, at a given institution. I have talked to librarians from institutions (excluding the ten listed) where there is a library instruction program which is only supported by a few librarians and "boycotted" by others who believe such a program is a "frill", unnecessary and not the responsibility of librarians.

**Faculty support for library instruction usually involves course-related activities. The librarian and instructor cooperate in a given course which includes library research and the librarian teaches the student in such a course the needed library skills to do the research. This type of cooperation requires that the instructor realizes the need for library skills and recognizes the librarian's expertise in teaching students such skills. Furthermore, the instructor must realize the importance of library instruction to the extent of devoting actual class time to it.

instruction programs varied considerably among the visited institutions. It was strongest in the smaller institutions and where top administrative support exists. It was also stronger in institutions where librarians had demonstrated their capabilities as instructors and contributors to students' learning as well as their expertise in information retrieval techniques. However, it was weak in the traditional and large research institutions.

At most of the institutions visited one person has ultimate responsibility for the library instruction program. This person does not actually do all the instruction and preparation of materials but coordinates all such activities. Where a library instruction committee exists, its function is advisory and it facilitates communication within the library. At all of the institutions the library instruction "coordinator" has access to clerical and student help. Most of these "coordinators" summarize their library instruction activities in the form of an annual report.

The library instruction activities vary quite a bit among the visited institutions. All of them provide the students with orientation to the library, its facilities, and services, by making available self-guided tours in print or media format, by offering special group tours and by displaying handouts near the entrance.

Instruction-in-library-use activities occur in various formats at these institutions but they all utilize more than

one format. Course-related* library instruction occurs in 90% of the observed programs and involves many subject areas. In some institutions librarians work mostly with English composition or communication courses; in other institutions, they work with almost all the academic departments. The instruction is usually supplemented by media and print materials and may take from a one-hour session to several meetings with a given class.

40% of these institutions offer or have offered a credit course in library research methods and several of the other institutions are exploring the possibilities of offering such a course. These courses range from one- to four-credit and from general to subject-oriented courses. They are usually available for undergraduates on an elective basis. In general, the enrollment for these courses has been low.

Half of the visited institutions utilize some form of programmed library instruction, mostly some type of workbook or exercises which the student can complete individually with help from the librarians. This type of instruction is required and/or for credit at some of these institutions. In conjunction with the workbooks, a pre and post test is usually administered to assess the student's progress.

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*Course-related library instruction means providing students in a given course with library skills needed to complete the objectives of the course. The librarian provides the needed instruction in cooperation with the instructor during class time. Usually such instruction is also assignment-related and given at a time when the need for it is most apparent, e.g. after students receive a library assignment and before they start to work on it.

Non-credit workshops such as mini-sessions, term paper clinics, library seminars, etc. are offered by 70% of the involved institutions. Some of the large and traditional institutions find this format of library-use instruction to be practical. It does not require strong faculty cooperation and it attracts those students who are really interested and motivated. These workshops are usually offered during the period when students are working on term papers or other library research. However, some of the institutions have discontinued this type of library instruction activity because very few students (sometimes none) participated.

Most of the listed institutions (80%) use some type of point-of-use instruction. This is an explanation of how to use a given reference tool, and it is located close to the tool. Many varieties of this point-of-use instruction are utilized from the most sophisticated media presentation to a simple printed sheet. They have the advantage, that they are always available whenever a user needs help and whether or not a librarian is available.

As mentioned before, the instructional support materials used at the visited libraries are impressive. They include everything from lengthy annotated bibliographies and handbooks to search strategies* and bibliographic guides. Originality and attractiveness are only two of the many positive features displayed on these materials.

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*A search strategy can be defined as the most efficient way to collect all pertinent information on a given topic.

80% of the visited libraries are using some type of media for orientation and instructional purposes. Included were audio, slide-tape and filmstrip programs. It was disappointing that the majority of these media presentations were not in working order during my visit because of equipment problems.

More than half of these libraries (60%) have set up objectives for their library instruction programs. These objectives vary from the simple to the most sophisticated, but they are usually based on guidelines suggested by the ACRL Task Force on Bibliographic Instruction (see Bibliography, item 15). The librarians use the objectives to define and assess their instructional activities.

PROGRAM IMPACT

Since I only chose to visit library instruction programs which had been in existence five or more years, I wanted to find out what, if any, impact the programs have had on campus. First I asked if and how statistics had been kept (see Appendix 3 for a suggested statistics form). I was surprised to find that some institutions have not kept library instruction statistics regularly but had only recently begun this process. Where statistics had been kept from the beginning, it was possible to gauge a program's growth in the area of faculty and student contact, materials produced, use of media and so on.

To assess the impact of the library instruction programs at each of the visited institutions, I talked to students, faculty and administrators. The students' comments ranged from an indication that they had too much library instruction to not having had enough. Some complained about "duplication," that is, they had library instruction in several courses. Others felt that they had too much library research and too many papers to write. In general, they all felt that it was not the most important part of their education but one of many needed skills and that once they obtained library instruction, they benefitted from it. All the students commented on the open and friendly atmosphere in their library and how much they liked this and the helpfulness of librarians.

The faculty members I interviewed were most individualistic in their comments but they all agreed that library instruction

was important for students in order to attain some success in library research. Most of these instructors had not always been convinced of the importance of library instruction nor that it should be provided by librarians. They had been converted slowly and systematically by a librarian devoted to library instruction. These instructors had developed high respect for the capabilities of such librarians in the educational process of students and were now "promoters" of library instruction. They felt generally, that the librarians could contribute greatly by providing students with the needed library skills, because they know search strategies and information retrieval methods better than most faculty.

Library instruction activities have also had an impact on the library itself. The visited institutions reported an increase in use of materials, a need to replace reference materials more frequently, more difficult questions, a need for more public service personnel and for more funds to produce instructional materials. In some of the visited institutions a reorganization had occured to shift more personnel into public services.

The impact of the library instruction on the administration has usually been positive. Favorable comments about the program from students and faculty are often sent to administrators. Statistics documenting an increase in use due to the library instruction program have also had positive effects on administrators. In some cases, a negative or uncommitted administration has been converted to support the library instruction program.

Some factors which have had negative effects on the library

instruction programs at times have been changes in personnel (both in the administration and among librarians), particularly if the new personnel is not convinced of the importance of library instruction.

Most of the programs visited try to do some type of evaluation, such as questionnaires to students and faculty, user and attitude studies, pre and post tests and where the program is based on objectives, a more systematic evaluation. All reported problems with evaluation and a need for more information in this area.

The cost of the programs is difficult to assess. In most cases it involves one or two full-time librarians or their equivalent, one full-time secretary and from 10-40 hours of student help. Some funds for the production of printed and media materials must also be allocated. It is impossible to quote a dollar figure because the institutions vary in size, type of program and salary scales.

All of the institutions assured me that their library instruction programs would be continued and that they were always trying to improve it. All of the programs have undergone some changes since they first begun; usually the result has been an improvement.

Publicity for the library instruction program is a key element for its success. The visited libraries are all involved in publicizing their programs continually on campus to students, faculty and administrators by utilizing posters, special handouts, campus publications, radio and television. These activities help to build support for the program and to increase participation in it.

CONCLUSION

In many respects the ten selected institutions represent a cross section of North American academic institutions and library instruction activities.

The small and/or new institutions (enrollment to 5,000) seemed to have the most "successful" library instruction program in terms of administrative support, extent of faculty cooperation and percentage of students reached. The large and/or traditional institutions are in a disadvantaged position in regards to library instruction. They have more difficulties obtaining administrative support and faculty cooperation, and it often seems impossible to reach all students through library instruction without any requirements for it.

The larger libraries rely more on media to orient and instruct students in library use. However, if media is part of the library orientation-instruction activities, it is imperative that it is always in good working order or any positive effects will quickly become negative ones. It is, therefore, important for libraries with media programs to have access to quick and professional media services to alleviate equipment failures as soon as they occur.

All types of libraries use supplementary print materials for orientation and instruction. These materials are displayed at strategic points for potential library users, at the entrance, in the lobby or at the point of use. They are available in many varieties, are often color-coded and demonstrate the librarians' concern for teaching students the use of the library. These

materials need to be revised and updated continually to remain useful. Students have found these printed guides and handouts most useful.

All of the visited libraries provide orientation services and materials in varying formats, most often a self-guided printed or media tour (100%) supplemented by handouts describing services.

Short non-credit workshops offering library skills instruction are available in a majority of the institutions, especially the larger and more traditional ones where the initiative for participating in such instruction is up to the individual student.

Some course-related library instruction takes place in most of the visited institutions. Depending on the degree of faculty cooperation and administrative support which exists for library instruction in a given institution, course-related library instruction is either a minor or major part of the total library instruction program. Because course-related library instruction is part of the students' course work and advocated by the faculty, many of the interviewed librarians feel that this type of library instruction can be most effective. This instructional activity relies heavily on faculty cooperation which is sometimes difficult to obtain. From my interviews with faculty and librarians, I ascertained, that faculty cooperation with library instruction can be developed on any campus if librarians are willing to demonstrate to the faculty that they are experts in the area of library research strategies and information retrieval and that they, too, have something to contribute to the education of students. It is a slow process, but if librarians are

consistent in this endeavor and support the faculty's teaching and research activities as much as possible, they will succeed in gaining faculty support for library instruction.

Almost half of the visited institutions also have offered or are offering credit courses in library research. Opinions on the effectiveness of this type of library instruction are divided. Some librarians have found the credit courses successful methods of library instruction, others have not. Since such courses are usually elective ones, some institutions have not had sufficient enrollment in these courses to continue teaching them. In some institutions problems with such courses arose in the area of library personnel. Often there is not enough library staff to provide sufficient release time for librarians who teach these courses.

Programmed library instruction in the form of workbooks and exercises is also utilized effectively. Sometimes this type of instruction is used in connection with a credit course, sometimes with course-related instruction and on occasions, on a voluntary, individual basis. Programmed library instruction can be individualized, can be graded or checked quickly and can be used with large numbers of students and a minimum of library personnel.

All the visited libraries offer a variety of the described activities. It is felt that since students, courses and faculty differ in their approach to instruction and in the type of information needed, it is more effective to make various types of library instruction methods available.

A library instruction program is also more effective when supported fully by all members of the staff and coordinated by one person. In small institutions the coordinating of the library instruction program can be informal but in larger institutions it needs to be clearly defined and supported by a committee.

It seems also more effective to organize a library instruction program around well-defined objectives. These objectives should be based on the institution's instructional objectives, the guidelines proposed by the ACRL Task Force on Bibliographic Instruction (see Bibliography, item 15) and, they should take into consideration any special characteristics of students and faculty. The objectives should be discussed among the library staff and with the administration. After they are finalized, they should be widely publicized on campus. The established objectives will facilitate planning, implementing and evaluating the library instruction program. They will also aid in obtaining budget support.

In connection with implementing and evaluating the objectives of a library instruction program, it is important to keep relevant statistics. These will help to assess the progress and impact of the program and to obtain continued administrative support.

Continuous publicity of the library instruction program is another component which contributes to its success. It should not be assumed that since the program was publicized throughout one term it does not need to be publicized the next term. Library instruction is not considered the most important part

of academic instruction on most campuses (unfortunately) and tends to be quickly forgotten or ignored when other pressing problems occur. Therefore, repeated publicity is a necessity.

Libraries interested in developing an effective library orientation program have to have flexibility and staff members who are creative, energetic and diplomatic. It is possible that at this point, the question arises "Is it really worth it?" It is, if librarians are concerned about accountability, increased and better use of libraries and creating positive attitudes in library users. One senior student told me: "This is the first place that I feel comfortable in using a library. It is so open, the librarians trust us. They are always friendly and helpful, no matter, what the problem is. Sure, I get tired of doing all these research papers but I guess, I am learning about the library constantly. I like our library because it is less restricted, I wish all libraries could be this way!"

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Appendix 1

List of Institutions Visited	Duration of Library Instruction Program	Enrollment
Concordia University, Montreal, Canada* (formerly Sir George Williams University) Hilary Anderson	6 years	10,800
Earlham College, Richmond, IN Tom Kirk	13 years	1,100
Miami Dade Community College, South Campus, Miami, FL Susan Gray	8 years	11,400
Massachussetts Institute of Technology, Boston, MA Katherine Cippolla, Irma Johnson	5 years	8,000
Northeastern University, Boston, MA Arline Willar	5 years	36,000
Sangamon State University, Springfield, IL Joyce Snarski	6 years	2,400
Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, IL Ruth Schwebke	11 years	10,600
State University of New York, Brockport, NY Peter Olevnik	7 years	9,000
University of Colorado, Boulder, CO John Lubans	6 years	20,000
University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Kenosha, WI Carla Stoffle	6 years	4,000

*Even though only one Canadian institution is listed in Appendix 1, my information concerning Canadian academic library instruction is also based on other institutions. I talked at great length with librarians from Laval University, McGill University, McMaster University, Queens University, the University of Western Ontario and the University of Windsor. All of the universities have active library orientation and instruction programs. I also relied heavily on Sheila Laidlaw's "Library Instruction in the 70's: the State of the Art in Canadian in Canadian Academic Libraries" in the forthcoming proceedings from the Sixth Annual Conference on Library Orientation for Academic Libraries held May 13 and 14, 1976 at EMU, to be published by Pierian Press.

Appendix 2

Criteria used to Assess Library Instruction Programs at the Institutions Visited

I. Administration and Staff Support

Is there support from the institution's administration? How much?

Is there support from the library's admimistration? How much?

Is there support from the faculty? How much?

Is there support from other librarians? How much?

Who has responsibility for the library instruction program and to whom does this person report?

II. Library Instruction Activities

Which types of instructional methods are utilized in the programs?

a. course-related instruction
b. credit course(s)
c. programmed instruction (media, workbooks, computer-assisted)
d. other (mini-workshops, term paper clinics, etc.)
e. a combination of two or more

Is the library instruction program based on a set of objectives?

Which kinds of instructional materials are used to supplement and support the library instruction program?

III. Program Impact

Have statistics been kept since the beginning of the program? Are they adequate?

What has been the impact of the program

a. on the students?
b. on the faculty?
c. on the library, especially the use of the library?
d. on the administration?

Has the program been formally evaluated? How?

What is the cost of the program?

Will the program be continued?

Appendix 3

LIBRARY INSTRUCTION STATISTICS

Month:_____ Year:_____

	CURRENT PERIOD		TOTALS FORWARD		NEW TOTALS	
1. STUDENT CONTACT	# GROUPS	# STUDENTS CONTACTED	# GROUPS	# STUDENTS	# GROUPS	# STUDENT
GROUP MEETINGS						
TOURS						
CLASS SESSIONS						
TOTALS:						
2. FACULTY CONTACT	# GROUPS	# FACULTY CONTACTED	# GROUPS	# FACULTY	# GROUPS	# FACULTY
VISITS TO						
VISITS FROM						
PHONE CALLS TO						
PHONE CALLS FROM						
GROUP MEETINGS						
TOTALS:						
3. TOURS- Special Groups	# TOURS	# PEOPLE	# TOURS	# PEOPLE	# TOURS	# PEOPLE
TOTALS:						
4. MEDIA PROGRAMS	TIMES USED	# PEOPLE	TIMES USED	# PEOPLE	TIMES USED	# PEOPLE
TOTALS:						
5. PRINTED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS	NUMBERS USED		NUMBERS USED		NUMBERS USED	
TOTALS:						

Appendix 4

Statistical Summary of Library Instruction Activities
(the ten visited programs equal 100%)

Administrative Support

complete 30% (all the way to the president) partial 60% none 10%

Library Staff Support

complete 20% partial 80% none ___

Faculty Support and Involvement

complete 20% (90%-100% of faculty) partial 70% none 10%

Program Administration

Separate library instruction unit with full-time coordinator 20%

Partial involvement of all public or reference services librarians under direction of public services (reference) head 70%

Library Instruction Committee 30%

Instructional Activities

Orientation activities 100%
Course-related 90%
Credit course 40%
Programmed 50%
Non-credit workshops 70%
Point-of-use instruction 60%
Media materials 80%
Printed materials 100%
Combination of two or more of the above 100%

Objective-based program 60%

Program statistics available (at least in part) 90%

Partial evaluation of program 70%